

Matt Blunt, Governor

Mark James, Director

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Missouri's Homeland Security Looks to Regionalization to Maximize Future Federal Grants

JEFFERSON CITY, August 23, 2006— In an effort to maximize the return on investments of future homeland security grants in Missouri, Gov. Matt Blunt, early in his administration, realized the need to improve the way we spent our homeland security grant money.

“The more we engage local jurisdictions to participate in a cohesive regional effort, the greater impact our future Homeland Security grants will have to protect our citizens,” said Mark James, Director of Department of Public Safety. “This will become especially important this fall, when homeland security grants are awarded to each region.”

The governor empowered his Homeland Security Advisory Council to further authorize jurisdictions and governmental agencies at the most basic level to have input into how vital federal dollars are spent. Through Executive Order 06-09, Gov. Blunt established the concept of Regional Homeland Security Oversight Committees (RHSOC), to bring his vision to reality.

The Missouri Office of Homeland Security (MHS), working with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and a select number of Missouri's Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's), have been organizing these committees around the state. The committees are designed to first on a regional basis, and then collectively as a state, embrace a seamless, unified approach to future planning, training, and equipment purchases.

Over several months, SEMA Deputy Director Duane Nichols, and Homeland Security Coordinator Paul Fennewald met with various first responder agencies, emergency management directors, local elected officials, and Missouri Association of

Councils of Government (MACOG) staff. The meetings allowed participants to familiarize themselves with the regionalization concept, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. These partners were asked for input on making this process better, and many of their suggestions were adopted for the final template of the Committees.

“The U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages states to regionalize their Homeland Security efforts. Missouri is at the forefront of creating this more effective regional model,” said Randy Railsback, President of the MACOG and Executive Director of the Green Hills Regional Planning Commission.

Based on the Missouri State Highway Patrol Troop Area geographic boundaries, the nine Regional Oversight Committees will identify local priorities, capabilities, and coordinate program activities within their region. As one body, the committee will make recommendations to Missouri’s Homeland Security Advisory Council for program and equipment priorities. Each Oversight Committee is comprised of representatives from various jurisdictions and non-voting ex-officio state agencies. The RPC provides administrative and fiscal support to each Regional Oversight Committee.

The thirteen core disciplines represented in Regional Oversight Committee are: Director of Emergency Management, Police Chief, Sheriff, Fire Chief, County Health, Homeland Security Response Team, City or County Public Works, Mayor or City Administrator, County Commissioner, Private Industry/Public Utility, Emergency Medical Service, 911, Volunteer Group Representation.

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